



Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Bulletin

<http://tasfieldnats.org.au>

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Tulip Shell egg capsules, Rheban Beach, October excursion
Photograph: Ruth Bucher

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2019 Advance notice of excursions

February 16-17th The Big Punch Bowl, East Coast.

Note the date is a week later than usual. This will replace the usual February excursion. For more details see:

<https://tasland.org.au/reserves/the-big-punchbowl>

For those wishing to stay overnight on Feb. 16th , there is the possibility of renting three cottages close to the Punchbowl. Email Amanda Thomson at holsum6@bigpond.com if you are interested in sharing ASAP. Otherwise make own arrangements or plan to make it a day trip.

19-21 April Easter Camp at Mole Creek

Accommodation booked by TFNC at Mole Creek Cabins. Indicate an expression of interest to secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au ASAP.

Program

Thursday 1st. November - Meeting	Guest speaker: Dr Catherine Byrne (Senior Curator of Zoology) A Lepidopterist's Taxonomic Toolkit and <i>Thalaina</i> , the Australian Geometrid Satin Moths.
Saturday 3rd. November - Excursion - Please note start time is 2pm	Visit to Rosny Collections and Research Facility. Numbers are limited and children under 13 cannot attend. Booking is essential. At time of press there are still some vacancies! Please email secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au to book ASAP.
Thursday 6th. December - Meeting and Members' Night	Members are invited to present a short 'show and tell' of their observations from the natural world. Email: President@tasfieldnats.org.au with your proposal.
Sunday 9th. December - Annual Picnic	Annual TFN Christmas picnic. We are planning a walk up Echo Sugarloaf to be followed by a BBQ at Randall's Bay. See our website for more details closer to the date.

General Meetings start at 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm on the first Thursday of the month and feature a guest speaker on natural history (no meetings or excursions in January). Meetings are held in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania.

Excursions are usually held the following Saturday or Sunday, meeting at 9.00 am outside the Museum in Macquarie St, Hobart. Bring lunch and all-weather outdoor gear. If you are planning to attend an outing, but have not been to the prior meeting, please confirm the details on the club website as late changes are sometimes made.

Eucalyptus ID with Mark Wapstra

Saturday August 4th.

Fourteen people met at the car park near the Curtis lab. When we went in we had a seat at one of the tables and sorted out the 36 different specimens of eucalypts into piles. Then Mark Wapstra had a little powerpoint showing the different types of rare and endangered *Eucalyptus* species. Then he told us how to key them out using the key that he made with Fred Duncan. It was a little hard at the start but as we keyed more it got easier and it was good fun.

After that 13 of us went to Huon Rd to key some *Eucalyptus* in the wild. We used the leaves that had fallen off the trees if we couldn't reach ones that were attached. We used the capsules off the stems and the leaves. We found about 4 or 5 different species in the one area.

In my point of view I enjoyed it and it was interesting to learn about. Especially how important it is to learn what the endangered ones are so people don't chop them down.

Erika Ledster

Eucalypt identification is notoriously difficult. Some can be very similar with only small differences, some show a variation in form depending upon where they are growing and some have a tendency to hybridise with each other. Quite often a quick look isn't enough to know who you are looking at.

Mark Wapstra kindly came in to the UTAS Curtis Lab on Saturday to take us through a key that he and Fred Duncan are finalising. He had a great set up, with multiple pressed specimens of each different species. A couple of hours was spent in the lab using the keys to identify which specimen we had. Working in groups was by far the best plan, as even with a key it can be pretty tricky!

We then headed up to the mountain to test out our new skills on some real life specimens. Our first stop was on Huon road just past the Turnip fields. Identification is much harder in the real world. Leaves are high up, juvenile foliage isn't always easy to find, and capsules scrounged from the ground can't always be guaranteed to come from the tree it is under. We met with the challenge and managed to key out correctly a few different species. We did have Mark there to hint us in the right direction though.

At this point Erika and I had to leave, so missed

out on the rest of the day wandering the mountain looking at Eucs and everything around them. I will take a guess though and say that it would have been a great day with lots of *Eucalyptus* knowledge gained. A great big thank you to Mark for coming in and sharing his vast knowledge with us.

Fiona Walsh



Silver peppermint (*Eucalyptus tenuiramis*) forest

Photograph: Mick Brown

Mountain Huts Excursion

Saturday September 8th.

On a beautiful spring morning 14 Field Nats gathered in South Hobart to seek the remnants of some of the huts that were erected on Mt Wellington during the early 1900s. Our guides were Maria and John Grist who have done extensive research into the building of the huts and spent countless hours searching for their locations.

The huts were built from materials gathered in the bush, often near the sites of old sawmills and close to mountain streams. Extra rooms were added as required and extensive gardens with promenades and rock edged paths were created. The huts were used for socialising and recreation, many boasted of their fine cuisine and one was reputed to have a piano.



The first location we visited was Falls Hut which was constructed around 1891. It was originally a single room hut that grew to a three-roomed structure complete with a double decker rustic bridge. In the garden area we could see the remains of tree ferns with piles of stones around the base for decoration.

We then did a lot of bush bashing on a barely perceivable track to the location of Forest Hut. On the way we passed a couple of sawpits and also a snig track which was used to drag the felled trees down the hill to the timber mills. Like many of the huts on the mountain, Forest Hut was burnt down in the 1920 bush fires and very little evidence remains.

After lunch and a chat we then proceeded to Clematis Hut, which was constructed in the 1890s. The hut was very picturesque and elaborately decorated with *Clematis aristata* vines. It also had a large garden and the tree ferns planted in rows are still visible today.

After another trek through the bush we arrived at the site of the Ellis and Sansom Hut. It was a small simple hut, built in 1906, while the ruins were only rediscovered in 1990.



Forest Hut



Clematis Hut

All historical information and photos for this article were taken from Maria and John's website:

mtwellingtonhistory.com

Here you will find a wealth of detail and photographs of this fascinating part of our history.

Many thanks to Maria and John for conducting this excursion and sharing these secret sites with us.

Margaret Warren



Mountain Huts Excursion participants
Photograph: Amanda Thomson



Falls Hut site today
Photograph: Margaret Warren

Snail List (Kevin Bonham)

- Caryodes dufresnii*
- Helicarion cuvieri*
- Gratiloma* sp "Knocklofty"
- G. halli*
- Punctidae* sp "Micro Cripps"
- Trocholaoma parvissima*
- Kessneropa mimosae*
- Lehmannia nyctelia* (introduced slug)
- Deroceras reticulatum* (introduced slug)
- Kessneropa mimosae* *(formerly *Discocharopa mimosae*)

Kessneropa mimosae was found on a creek above Main Fire Trail. This is a common widespread wet forest species but this is only the third place I have found it on kunanyi/Mt Wellington. The others were near the Rivulet Track (on a previous mountain huts trip) and one specimen on Jacksons Bend Track.

Rheban Beachcombing

Sunday October 7th.

Attendees: Abbey Throssell, Ruth Bucher and Eddie Gall, Lynne Maher, Geoff and Annabel Carle, Geoff and Janet Fenton, Don Hird.

Rheban Beach is situated south of Orford. Rheban farm occupies the land to the north-west of the beach, while the south-eastern half of the beach, the spit, lagoon and wetland is a conservation area. Field Nats held Easter camps here in 1959 and 1960, staying on the old farm. More recently we had made a day excursion in Feb 2017.

Old photographs of the beach show a long jetty at the north-western end. Apparently remains of the 27m ketch, Annie Taylor wrecked in 1923 can sometimes be seen projecting out of the sand nearby. However, our nine field nats who headed along the beach in glorious sunshine had eyes only for the natural debris on the beach, concentrating on seashells and algae which littered the beach in profusion, particularly towards the south-eastern end. We progressed at typical field nats pace (Don commented that we'd made 50 metres in 50 minutes!) slowing to a standstill at a dead draughtboard shark rather worse for wear. After our Thursday evening talk on seaweed science by Helen Fitton we were keen to unravel some of the dried up tangles to separate and identify what we could.



Draughtboard Shark, *Cephaloscyllium laticeps*
Photograph: Geoff Fenton

Chunky dried ascidians looked rather unprepossessing, while delicate bryozoans, like intricate lacework, delighted us. Decorator and surf crab carapaces and a few cuttlefish were found here and there. Galeolaria and bryozoa encrusted many shells and seaweeds. A feature of the beach-wash was who was living on whom, reminding us that real

estate is at a premium under the waves. Tiny oysters and barnacles perched on scallops, seaweeds festooned oyster shells, Hydrozoans hung on brown seaweed and Bryozoans clung to mussels. Among our interesting finds were the kidney-shaped clear egg mass of the moon snail, tulip-shell egg capsules, a few cowries, a little ribbed cowrie *Ellatrivia*, the delicate shelf limpet, wavy shaped gaper and long white angel-wing. Fragile razor shells were seldom intact. Many of the more robust seashells were heavily eroded, and many were black. A Google trawl brought up the suggestion that the black colouring results from the shell being buried under anoxic conditions for a time. And speaking of black, we also found a lump of coal on the beach!



Red Bryozoan

Photograph: Geoff Fenton

We noticed some pieces of glass, plastic etc but the beach was relatively uncluttered with human generated debris.

A few invertebrates with legs were encountered on the sand: amphipods and isopods of course, and wonderfully camouflaged spiders, a few beetles, ants and a bug.



Spider found on Rheban beach
Photograph: Geoff Fenton

Bird life was a bit quiet (or weren't we looking up?) A pair of pied and a pair of sooty oystercatchers zoomed by on the stiff sea-breeze, kelp and silver gulls wandered on the sand, and near the car-park welcome swallows looped in the sky, and masked lapwings harassed a raptor. Footprints about the size of hooded plovers' were seen on the beach towards the south and these birds were observed on our previous field trip here. Dog footprints had stirred up the sand a lot, especially closer to the car-park, but further along the beach we did observe water rat, brush-tailed possum and possibly quoll footprints. Now and then we lifted our eyes from the sand to drink in the beautiful view of Maria Island across Mercury Passage.

We did not make it so far along the beach, but aerial images show a complex sand-spit zone at the exit of Earlham Lagoon at the south-east end: <https://beachsafe.org.au/beach/tas/glamorgan-spring-bay/rheban/rheban-beach>.

Acres of gorse behind the north-western end of the beach give way to native vegetation dominated by banksia and eucalypt towards the south. A paper in P&P Roy Soc Tas Vol 108 describes a vegetation survey in 1973. Interestingly, in this paper Bowden and Kirkpatrick also mention that at the south-east end of the beach the ridge system is advancing seaward, rather than eroding as is more typical for Tasmanian systems.

The following lists are by no means complete, but are what we were able to identify in the time.

Species list, Rheban Beach, 7 Oct 2018

Draughtboard Shark *Cephaloscyllium laticeps*

(Worse for wear!)

Ascidians – Cunjevoi

Red Bryozoan

Seaweeds (Annabel and Lynne)

Green Seaweeds

Zostera sp – Eel grass

Ulva sp – Sea Lettuce

Chaetomorpha sp. – Mermaids hair - fine segmented green thread-like species. (segments visible under a hand lens)

Brown Seaweeds

Caulocystis sp

Colpomenia sp - Leathery baggy sacs

Cystophora sp – very common

Ecklonia sp

Hormosira banksii – Neptunes necklace

Phyllotrichia sp

Phyllospora sp - toothed frond margins

Red seaweeds

Ceramium sp

Possibly *Sarcotrichia* sp

Seashells (Janet and Don)

Cuttlefish, *Sepia* sp

Dog-cockle, *Glycymeris striatularis*

Blue mussel, *Mytilus galloprovincialis planulatus*

White-sided horse-mussel, *Modiolaria albicostratus*

Common mud oyster, *Ostrea angasi*

King scallop, *Pecten fumatus*

Queen scallop, *Equichlamys bifrons*

Doughboy scallop, *Mimachlamys asperrima*

Southern gaper, *Panopea australis*

Australian angel-wing, *Pholas australasiae*

Thin-ribbed cockle, *Fulvia tenuicostata*

Elongate wedge-shell, *Paphies elongata*

Southern razor shell, *Solen vaginoides*

Wedding-cake venus, *Circomphalus disjecta*

Tasmanian callista, *Callista diemenensis*

Venus clam, *Irus* sp

Ridged venus, *Katelysia rhytiphora*

Tall limpet, *Notoacmea alta*

Maltese cross limpet, *Patelloida insignis*

Orange-edged limpet, *Cellana solida*

Blacklip abalone, *Holiotis rubra*

Painted lady pheasant shell, *Phasianella australis*

Warrener, *Turbo undulatus*

Black nerite, *Nerita* sp

New Zealand screw shell, *Maoricolpus roseus*

Shelf limpet, *Calyptraea calyptraeformis*

Brown cowrie, *Notocypraea angustata*

Ribbed cowrie, *Ellatrvia merces*

Striped conniwink, *Bembicium nanum*

Conical moon snail, *Polinices conicus*

Flag triton, *Argobuccinum pustulosum*

Spenglers rock whelk, *Cabestana spengleri*

Pear helmet, *Semicassis pyrum*

Half-grained helmet, *Semicassis semigranosum*

Australian tulip-shell, *Pleuroplaca australasia*

Common cartrut shell, *Dicathais orbita*

Wavy volute, *Amoria undulata*

Common siphon-shell, *Siphonaria diemenensis*

Library Corner

Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) Project

<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/collection/bhlau>

The project to incorporate 'The Tasmanian Naturalist' and our Easter Camp reports into BHL is still a work in progress.

In addition, the TFNC committee has agreed that all our Circulars/Quarterly Newsletters/Bulletins should also be included into BHL. To this end our entire hardcopy newsletter collection has been sent to BHL at Museums Victoria for scanning. They will be returned to us when the work is complete. In addition, and in due course all the editions that were 'born digital' (2000 onwards) will also loaded into BHL.

Search Tools

Meanwhile if you want to find a particular subject/ name within our Circulars/Quarterly Newsletters/ Bulletins collection they can be found on our website at:

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/bulletin/>

In the same way that Mark Wapstra developed tables to search The Tas Naturalists for subjects/ authors, we have developed four new searchable PDF tables. These tables cover the following topics:

- TFNC Excursions_Camps 1904 to 2018 (includes Easter Camps and Federation weekends). Where relevant it details where its report may be located
- TFNC Speakers_Topics 1907 to 2018
- TFNC Conservation matters, Fauna and Flora Obs 1937 to 2018
- TFNC's Organisation and Events 1904 to 2018

New to the library

The catalogue as at October 2018 can be found on our website at <http://tasfieldnats.org.au/library/>

Please use our library! It is sadly underutilised! Have you looked in the catalogue to see its many interesting books that would like to be read/ borrowed!

Please email librarian@tasfieldnats.org.au or see me in the foyer prior to a monthly meeting to borrow any book or to browse our collection.

Book accessions since April 2018

The Wasp and the Orchid. The remarkable life of Australian Naturalist Edith Coleman by Danielle Clode. This book will be reviewed in the 2018 *The Tasmanian Naturalist*.

The Curious Life of Krill. A Conservation Story from the Bottom of the World. By Stephen Nicol

Nicol takes us into the underwater habitat of krill, observing their life and habits firsthand... brings the biology and beauty of krill alive and his passion for their importance to nature serves as a powerful call to conserve them while we can.

The Romance of Mount Wellington - Aspects of the history of Mount Wellington, Hobart, Tasmania, in pictures and postcards. By John and Maria Grist.

We thank the authors for the donation of this book to the TFNC Library.

Tawny Frogmouth. 2nd edn. By Gisela Kaplan

This book presents an easy to read account of these unique nocturnal birds which can be found across almost the entire continent. This book will be reviewed in the 2018 *The Tasmanian Naturalist*.

Seaweed – Art meets Science. Photography by Ian Wallace

A collection of photographs from the 2010 exhibition with the same name as the book title. Kindly donated by Dr Helen Fitton - Marinova

Annabel Carle, FNC Librarian

About The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club

We encourage the study of natural history and support conservation. People of any age and background are welcome as members.

For more information, visit our website

<https://www.tasfieldnats.org.au/>

or email secretary@tasfieldnats.org.au or write to: GPO Box 68, Hobart, 7001

Subscriptions are:

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by cheque to the Club address,

by Paypal (follow the links on our website or EFT to the Club account:
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Your articles and photos for the Bulletin are welcome. Please email to the editor at

tfn.bulletin.editor@gmail.com